

Christian student ministry workers in Sweden developed a series of questions to ask when reading a Bible passage. Called the “Swedish Method” because of its origins, these questions can be used when reading the Bible by yourself or with others.

The daily readings in this family worship guide have a few questions. However, we encourage you, as appropriate for your family, to ask the following general questions of the text each day.



Is there something that ‘shines’ from the passage—whatever impacts most, or draws attention?



Is there something you don’t understand, or a question the passage raises in your mind?



Is there a personal application to your life?



Is there something you plan to share with someone else – and who will you share it with?



How do ideas in the passage interrelate? Or with other passages in this book – or in the whole Bible?

Worshipping Together is part of the vision and is a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Frankston, Victoria, Australia. frankstonrp.org.au bit.ly/WTrpcaf

The concept and layout draws heavily from *Let’s Worship God*, a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Airdrie, Scotland. airdrierpcs.org

The readings are from Tim Chester’s 3-year weekly reading plan. bit.ly/WkBbl or bit.ly/3yrBbl

The quote on the cover is from the article *What Shampoo and Family Worship Have in Common*, Written by Randy Greenwald, (Quoted from *Tabletalk* magazine, Nov 1997.)

Notes this week are drawn in part from commentaries on Amos by John Calvin, James Boice, Gordon Fee/James Stuart, and James Smith, and notes from the HCSB Study Bible, and the Reformation Study Bible

Worshipping Together



We love God because He first loved us.

And we love to tell God that we love Him.

Joyful and faithful worship together twice each Lord’s Day is the highlight of our week. We are glad that they said, “Let us go to the House of the Lord.” Corporate worship prepares us for the week and prepares us for Heaven.

In addition, we regularly worship God as families and as individuals.

One father put it this way:

The back of my shampoo bottle says, “Lather, rinse, repeat.” Simple enough that even I can do it. Though family worship may be a bit more complicated than shampooing hair, it ought not to be rated with “home dentistry” in the scale of difficulty.



If you could buy family worship in the store, it would come in the form of a Bible, and the directions would simply say, “Read, pray, repeat.” Men should gather their families at least once daily. They should read a portion of the Scriptures to them. And they should pray with them. There need be no fireworks or pizzazz to keep the kids interested. There needs to be only a father* with a heart-love for God – who desires to see that love appropriated by his children.*

Read, pray, repeat.

* Fathers leading their family in worship is always the goal. When, in the Lord’s providence, the father is absent or uninterested, a godly mother will lead her children

Reading Amos 1:1-2, 7:14-15 The Lord Roars

Notes (See back page for authors)
Amos, a shepherd and an arborist, was an unlikely prophet. But God called him and he obeyed. He dates his prophecy and Boice points out that *he is the earliest prophet who has left literary remains and whose dates are not in serious dispute*. He prophesies to Israel toward the end of the prosperous reign of King Jeroboam.

Smith comments that *the Book of Amos begins with a warning roar: "Yahweh from Zion roars, and from Jerusalem he gives forth his voice." This is not the roar of thunder, but of a lion. A lion roars when it is about to pounce upon the prey. Here the roar signals an imminent judgment.*

Fee/Stuart note that we must not *miss the geography: Yahweh roars in Zion: Carmel withers (NNW of Jerusalem on the Mediterranean, a straight line that would cross Bethel and Samaria!)*. (Bethel and Samaria are the religious and political capital cities of Israel.) God's judgment of Israel will cover the whole land. In this time of national expansion and prosperity (2Kings 14:23-25) God will judge His people.

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. What do we know about Amos?
 2. What do we know about God from these verses?
 3. What did Israel likely think in this time of national prosperity?
 4.     

- Praise Pray** Psalm 138b²
1. Remember in prayer that God is not a tame lion
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

¹ You will notice we only have a printed guide for 6 days. We recommend each Lord's Day you review the previous week's readings and/or the previous or current week's sermons and pray together

² Psalm selections are taken from the *Book of Psalms for Worship*. We encourage our congregation to sing the same selection each day for a week to gain familiarity with the selection

Reading Amos 2:12-16 Judgment begins with the house of God

Notes (See back page for authors)
Peter writes that judgment must begin with God's household. (1 Peter 4:17) Although Amos lists God's judgment of Israel last, he lists it in the most detail.

Boice comments that *this [judgment in v13-16] is simple truth, and an understatement at that. You cannot fool God. God means business. He is righteous and just, and those who are his people must live by the standard that flows from his own character. If we will nt do it, he will bring his judgment on us. He will not be accused of being two-faced. He will not judge the heathen and spare his people – if his people are guilty of th same sins, as they so often are. But how in the world can anyone live up to that standard? In ourselves we cannot. But the God who drove out the Amorites and defeated the Egyptians will help us if we want to walk in his way.*

Calvin prays this in his lectures on Amos: *Grant, Almighty God, that as you have not only redeemed us by the blood of your only begotten Son, but also guided us during our earthly pilgrimage, and supplied us with whatever is needful,—O grant, that we may not be unmindful of so many favours, and turn away from you and follow our sinful desires, but that we may continue bound to your service, and never burden you with our sins, but submit ourselves willingly to you in true obedience, that by glorifying your name we may carry you both in body and soul, until you at length gather us into that blessed kingdom which has been obtained for us by the blood of your Son. Amen.*

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. What judgment will God bring against Israel?
 2. How can anyone live up to God's standard?
 3. How can anyone escape God's just judgment?
 4.     

- Praise Pray** Psalm 138b
1. Pray that you will escape God's just judgment by faith
 2. Pray for your family
 3. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member
 4. Pray for the reading and preaching of God's word tomorrow

Reading Amos 2:4-11 Judah and Israel judged

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Now, in precisely the same formula, Amos pronounces God’s judgment on Judah first, then on Israel. Although this prophecy is primarily against Israel, Judah is not exempted. But, even with Judah’s announced judgment Israel may have been satisfied. Their list of sins, however, and judgment is the most developed of all of these eight judgments.

First note the severity and the direction of Judah’s sin. Each of the others are outward sins – against others. Judah’s particular sin is against God. They have rejected God’s commands and turned away from His ways to the lying idolatry of their ancestors. Their judgment will come – even though it is delayed.

Israel now finds themselves directly in God’s sight. (see 9:4b). Their sins are many – oppression of the poor and righteous, sexual immorality blended in with idolatry. Their sin is particularly wicked because of the way God has cared for them – protecting them and rescuing them from enemies, raising them up in His favour. Yet they spurned God’s kindnesses and turned against His ways.

As we read these judgments against Judah and Israel (and even against the nations) we should be asking – “In what ways is my sin like theirs?”. Let God meddle with our sins that we might confess and be forgiven.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What were Judah and Israel judged for?
2. What made their sins particularly wicked?
3. How are we tempted to sin like Israel and Judah did?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 138b
1. Confess your sins that God’s might faithfully forgive and cleanse
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Amos 1:3-8 Damascus and Gaza judged

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Amos now begins a series of pronounced judgments from God. These begin with Israel’s geographically closest neighbours. We can note that the first 4 (1:3-12) are announced in an X pattern – Syria (capital Damascus) to the NE, then Philistia (capital Gaza) to the SW, then Phoenicia (capital Tyre) to the NW, then Edom to the SE. (Then Ammon and Moab to the east between Syria and Edom are judged 1:13-2:3.)

Each of these judgments begin with the same formula – for three crimes, even four... Smith comments that *the individual oracles have similar structures. First they each begin with a declaration of divine hostility. “For three transgressions, yes for four, I will not reverse it.” This so-called X + 1 formula appears several times in the book of Proverbs (e.g., 30:15). This pattern appears also in the Ugaritic (Canaanite) literature. The idiom is intended to produce a cumulative effect. The cumulative effect of national sin is judgment. Second, God declares that he will not “reverse” that sentence of judgment. The warning roar would not be canceled. Third, Amos sets forth the reason for divine hostility against the nation. In fourth place stands a stereotyped announcement of the sending of fire against the place. Finally, the oracles speak of the removal of the king and the captivity of the people of each nation.*

God is serious in His judgment.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Who does God judge in these first 6 declarations of Amos?
2. What is the formula for Amos announcing God’s judgment?
3. How will this judgment from God be shown?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 138b
1. Rejoice in prayer that God has freed you from judgment
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Amos 1:9-12 Phoenicia and Edom judged

Notes
(See back page for authors)

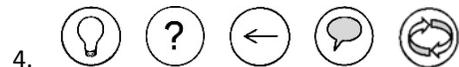
The judgment pronounced against Damascus and Gaza could be summarised as harsh cruelty. Damascus “threshed” Gilead with iron sledges (see Psalm 129:3), Gaza sold an entire community to exile in Edom. Phoenicia and Edom are judged similarly, with the added note that this cruelty was waged against brothers.

The RSB notes the likely reference to these sins: *The Syrians are accused of having treated Gilead with extreme cruelty (2 Kin. 13:7); The apparent [Gaza and Tyre] reference is to the capture and sale of Israelites during the reign of Jehoram (2 Chr. 21:16, 17; Joel 3:3, 6); These events of the reign of Jehoram include Edom’s revolt and collusion with the Philistines and Arabs, who attacked Judah and entered Jerusalem, plundering the palace and deporting the royal household (2 Chr. 21:16, 17; Obad. 10–14).*

Calvin notes that *it was not the Prophet’s design to enumerate all their sins, but that he was content to mention one crime. And further that these nations might then have objected, and said, that their neighbours were nothing better; ...that all were alike implicated in the same guilt and wickedness. But we see that God appears here as a judge against all nations. Let us not then be deceived by vain delusions, when we see that others are like us; let every one know that he must bear his own burden before God: God is serious in His judgment.*

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What were Syria and Philistia judged for?
2. What were Phoenicia and Edom judged for?
3. How do we sometimes excuse our sin by the sin of others?



Praise Psalm 138b

- Pray**
1. Commit in prayer to speak of God’s just coming judgment
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Amos 1:13-2:3 Ammon and Moab judged

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Now for these last two surrounding nations judgment is pronounced. The common theme of their sin seems to be that it is against the helpless – unborn children and dead heroes.

Again the RSB references these sins: *[Ammon’s] particular atrocity was practiced by others, including Hazael of Syria (2 Kin. 8:12), Menahem of Israel (2 Kin. 15:16), and Assyria (Hos. 13:16). The apparent purpose was to eliminate descendants who might try to reclaim the land; According to Hebrew tradition, these [burned bones] are the bones of the Moabite king Mesha. Such burning indicated special contempt.*

We can imagine Israel and Judah approving of these judgments. These wicked nations surrounding them certainly deserved God’s judgment. Boice tells a story of *a woman [who] attended an evangelistic meeting and was delighted when she learned that the preacher would talk about sin. When he preached against strong drink, she cried, “Preach it, brother!” When he declaimed against tobacco, she shouted, “Amen!” the minister’s third point was a condemnation of gossip, and she leaned over to her neighbor and said, “Now he’s not preachin’; he’s meddlin’.”* Judah and Israel will soon find God “meddlin’” with their sins.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What were Ammon and Moab judged for?
2. How should we respond to God judging the sins of others?
3. Why are we more pleased with God judging the sins of others than of our own?



Praise Psalm 138b

- Pray**
1. Rejoice in prayer in God’s just judgment
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member